



**Project Management Team
Benchmark Event Meeting Minutes
May 17 – 18, 2005
Governor's Inn
Pierre, South Dakota**

Overall objective: To gain feedback and information that will guide the Project Management Team in future decision making efforts and their assistance to the regions to ensure the success of Project ENRICH.

Outcomes:

1. Build relationships and shared understanding among and between the region coordinators, project director, and evaluator about the respective work of Project ENRICH.
2. Gather data through different perspectives as it relates to the Project Management Team's 2004-5 workplan in order to prepare for changes and modifications in the 2005-6 workplan.
3. Design an orientation process for Regions 1, 2 and 4.

Introductions and Roles

Angela Boddicker
Project ENRICH Project Director
Laurie Bedford
ESA 7 Project ENRICH Coordinator
Jamie Morris
ESA 6 Project ENRICH Coordinator
Sylvia Street
ESA 3 Project ENRICH Coordinator
Colleen Springer
ESA 3 Project ENRICH Coordinator
Erik Person
ESA 5 Project ENRICH Coordinator
MaryLou McGirr
Project ENRICH Evaluator

Outcome 1 - Build relationships and shared understanding among and between the region coordinators, project director, and evaluator about the respective work of Project ENRICH.

1. The participants identified highlights or positive key activities/events that occurred as part of his/her involvement in Project ENRICH on either the state or regional level. A summary of these highlights follows.
 - Advisory Teams are comprised of stakeholders who represent a diverse population, provide expertise, involved in planning and decision making.
 - Birth to 3 involvement is a strong component of the grant.
 - Regions are diverse geographically, through programming and represent different needs.
 - Programming is needs driven and involves professional development designed to meet the needs of everyone who is involved in the education of students with special needs including parents.
 - Project ENRICH operates as a part of the ESA, not a separate entity. Connections exist through linkages and partnerships with other projects and initiatives.
 - Collaboration of regions occurs through workplans and rfps.
 - Parent involvement is encouraged and parents are heavily involved in the advisory team process.
2. Participants identified frustrations experienced as a part of his/her involvement in Project ENRICH on either the state or regional level.
 - Clarity of the big picture is not always apparent to the people in decision making capacities because of several issues:
 - establishment of connections
 - distribution of accurate information
 - recognition by key stakeholders
 - creation of balanced buy-in
 - determination of key stakeholders within the districts
 - Development and administration of effective professional development is a challenge because of several issues:
 - assimilation based on needs
 - difficulty in locating best practices
 - difficult to keep momentum going
 - special education is not always viewed in a positive way

3. Sustainability requires long-range planning, continued momentum, development of region websites and the ability of everyone to see the big picture.

Outcome 2. Gather data through different perspectives as it relates to the Project Management Team's 2004-5 workplan in order to prepare for changes and modifications in the 2005-6 workplan.

The participants identified ways the leadership, operations and activities within the Project Management Team's arena supported and facilitated the achievement of the grant's goals and outcomes in their regions. The PMT

1. Defined roles and responsibilities
2. Awarded grants, disseminated professional development and needs assessment data, and approved work plans.
3. Provided Birth to 3 statewide training.
4. Monitored research based training through work plans.
5. Monitored professional development opportunities to schools not making AYP through ESAs.
6. Supported connections and collaboration with Reading First and SD Reads.
7. Monitored region activities that provided involvement of everyone involved with students with special needs, including parents.
8. Provided a clearinghouse of professional development via website.
9. Collaborated with ESAs to disseminate information, coordinate capacity building and integration with pre-existing initiatives, and supported improvement efforts.

The participants identified ways the leadership, operations and activities within the Project Management Team's arena could further support and facilitate the achievement of the grant's goals and objectives in their regions.

1. Improve dissemination of information from DOE to region coordinators.
2. Provide information in regard to the Math Initiative
3. Encourage the DOE to continue progress with the clearinghouse website.
4. Provide links on the ENRICH website to the regions' websites and other areas such as best practices and scientifically researched based data.
5. Pursue dialogue and communication with Native American Coordinator in the fall.

The participants identified additional activities that would contribute to the achievement of the grant's goals and outcomes.

1. Facilitate regular Project Management Team meetings twice a year with additional DDN sessions as needed.

2. Improve communication between the DOE and the coordinators. Angie will create a coordinator distribution list to disseminate information.
3. Improve communication among coordinators.

Outcome 3. Design an orientation process for Regions 1, 2 and 4.

The participants used information gathered in Outcomes 1 and 2 to design an orientation process for the coordinators of Regions 1, 2 and 4 to be held August 9 in Pierre.

The overarching outcome for the orientation process is:

To create a clear picture of the responsibilities of the coordinator's role, provide direction and support to guide the coordinators of Regions 1, 2 and 4, and create a collaborative relationship which will exist among all of the region coordinators to ensure the success of Project ENRICH.

These areas will be addressed:

Advisory Teams – Erik Person, facilitator

Programming – Jamie Morris and Laurie Bedford, facilitators

Connections and Collaboration - Sylvia Street and Colleen Springer, facilitators

PMT and Department of Education Information - Angie Boddicker

Evaluation Information – MaryLou McGirr

A two-hour block will be reserved at the orientation meeting to discuss issues pertaining to the operation and governance of Project ENRICH on regional, state and federal levels. Discussion items will be collected and facilitated by Jamie Morris.

Angela Boddicker will make the accommodations for the event.

Other business:

1. The roles and responsibilities of the Project Management Team and the Coordinators were modified.
2. Angie will discuss the needs assessment issue with Wade Pogany. Should the DOE and ESAs both continue to administer needs assessments. Does the DOE needs assessment and the ESA assessments address the same issues?
3. The Federal Report is due June 1, 2005 and MaryLou and Angie are in the process of completing it. It will be sent electronically May 26, 2005.

Evaluation information:

1. Each region will host a benchmark activity that will guide them through the action research cycle and assist them in developing the 2005-06 workplan. Because of the summer schedule, coordinators are encouraged to be creative in conducting this process.
2. MaryLou is in the process of collecting documentation and evidence. An evaluation plan, guiding questions and set of action steps were distributed to the coordinators.

Next steps:

1. Regions plan benchmark activities.
2. Orientation Meeting will be August 9 in Pierre.
3. Region coordinators will send their work plans to MaryLou by Sept. 15 for approval. She will distribute them to Angie, Michelle Powers, Sherrie Fines and Janet Ricketts for approval. This process will be completed via email.
4. The 2005-06 work plans will be approved and ready to implement by October 1, 2005.

